II.   Remarks

A.   Introduction

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully requested. Claims 1 and 21 have been amended. New claims 30 to 52 have been added. Claims 1 to 14 and 21 to 52 are now pending in the subject application. Claims 1, 21, 30 and 44 are independent.

B.   Claim Rejections under Section 102(b)

<u>1.   Exchange Fails to Teach Every Element of Independent Claims 1 and 21</u>

Claims 1 to 14 and 21 to 29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by the publication entitled "Exchange 2000 Conferencing Server Concepts and Planning" (August 30, 2000) (hereinafter "Exchange"). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection based on the above claim amendments and for the reasons that follow.

Independent Claim 1 submitted herewith recites a method for creating and managing a shared workspace in a network environment comprising the steps of creating a shared workspace associated with a scheduled meeting *prior to the scheduled meeting* and making the created shared workspace accessible to participants of the scheduled meeting *immediately after the shared workspace is created*, categorizing data stored in the shared workspace at the time the data is input into the shared workspace using a set of defined categories associated with the shared workspace and exposing the categorized data stored in the shared workspace to each participant of the scheduled meeting accessing the shared workspace through a graphical user interface. The graphical user interface enables each participant to input data into appropriate categories of the shared workspace and edit categorized data exposed through the graphical user interface.

Exchange discloses an extensible platform for real-time online conferencing that allows users to schedule and join conferences, but fails to teach a shared workspace for a scheduled meeting *prior to the scheduled meeting* and making the shared workspace accessible to participants of the scheduled meeting through a graphical user interface *immediately after the shared workspace is created* as claimed. As described in Chapter 2 of Exchange, when a conference is scheduled, the conference management server creates a uniform resource locator (URL) for the conference. Conference attendees are able to use the URL to access the

conference. The conference management service stores all scheduled conferences in a conference calendar mailbox. This information is used to create a persistent reproduction of the conference format, structure and any additional information associated with the conferences. A data conferencing provider provides shared clipboard and whiteboard features to enable conference participants to share applications, conduct whiteboard sessions, transfer files and chat. This data collaboration is accomplished using tools such as Microsoft NetMeeting or other applications that support the T.120 network communications standard. Participants experience data conferencing in various ways, depending on their T.120 and Internet browser applications. **During** a data conference, the computer of each participant is connected to a T.120 multipoint control unit (MCU). (See MS Exchange 2000 Conferencing Server Datasheet - Data Conferencing Provider).

The data conferencing provider of Exchange creates a resource scheme based on its maximum permissible conference participant connections. This maximum participation count is the physical resource against which the conferencing resource makes reservations when one is invited to an online conference. Each conferencing resource has a size associated with it, and the conference management service considers this size as the cost of hosting the conference. The data conferencing provider subtracts the resource cost from the maximum participation count. If the remaining available maximum participation count is greater than the resource cost, the resource is reserved for the requested time period. If the available count is less that the size of the resource for any specific requested time, the data conferencing provider prompts the conference management service to publish a busy indication, and no additional reservations are accepted.

During a data conference, Exchange discloses that the computer of each participant is connected to a T.120 multipoint control unit (MCU). On the conferencing site, the T.120 MCU can be installed on multiple servers running Microsoft Windows 2000. Exchange conferencing server groups these MCUs to provide fail-over and load balancing across the conferencing site. These groups of MCUs provide the platforms on which each scheduled data conference is hosted. When a participant joins a data conference, the data conferencing provider disclosed in Exchange uses the following criteria to select the best MCU:

Which MCUs are available and in service?

Is the conference already running on an MCU?

What load do existing conferences place on the MCU?

Are there any administratively defined restrictions on which MCU can be used?

What is the network location of the participant?

Is the participant inside the local conferencing site?

Is the participant inside a site that is administratively defined as a local site?

Is the participant outside the organization's network?

Using these criteria, the data conferencing provider connects a conference participant to a load-balanced MCU that is closest to his or her network location, minimizing the number of data copies that are sent between these locations. Because the data conferencing provider assigns an MCU **when a participant joins a conference**, the interconnection of MCUs in the conference is always dynamic and can optimize server availability.

Exchange discloses that **during** a data conference, conference participants can share applications, conduct whiteboard sessions, transfer documents, and chat. Exchange however does not disclose, teach or suggest creating a shared workspace for a scheduled meeting *prior to the scheduled meeting* and making the shared workspace accessible to participants of the scheduled meeting through a graphical user interface *immediately after the shared workspace is created* as claimed. Rather, Exchange discloses that when a conference is scheduled, the conference management server creates a uniform resource locator (URL) for the conference. Conference attendees are able to use the URL to access the conference. There is nothing in Exchange to suggest that participants may use the URL to transfer documents **before** the scheduled conference.

Furthermore, contrary to the Examiner's allegations, Exchange in no way teaches, suggests or discloses a graphical user interface that enables each participant to store data and categorize the data stored in the shared workspace using a set of defined categories associated with the shared workspace. Rather, Exchange simply teaches the loading or sketching of diagrams, organizational charts or other graphical information in a multi-page, multi-user drawing application. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that independent Claim 1 and the claims dependent thereon, distinguish patentably over Exchange at least for the reasons set forth above and should be allowed.

Independent Claim 21 defines a system for creating and managing a secure shared workspace for a scheduled meeting and recites subject matter analogous to that recited in independent Claim 1. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that independent Claim 21 and the claims dependent thereon, distinguish patentably over Exchange and should be allowed.

2.   New Claims

New independent Claim 30 defines a method for creating and managing a secure shared workspace for a scheduled meeting and recites, in part, creating a shared workspace for a meeting before the time at which the meeting is scheduled to begin and making the shared workspace accessible to participants of the scheduled meeting through a graphical user interface immediately after the shared workspace is created. At least for the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully submits that new Claim 30 and the claims dependent thereon distinguish patentably over Exchange and should be allowed.

Independent Claim 44 defines a system for creating and managing a secure shared workspace for a scheduled meeting and recites subject matter analogous to that recited in independent Claim 30. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that New Claim 44 and the claims dependent thereon, distinguish patentably over Exchange and should be allowed.

C.   **Conclusion**

In view of the above, it is believed the application is in order for allowance and action to that end is respectfully requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 625-3500. All correspondence should be directed to the address given below.

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